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ABSTRACT

Examples of innovations in college and adult reading reading programs in five states are described. At Maricopa Technical College (Arizona) adult students have access to a special reading program emphasizing the language experience approach, capitalizing on students' life experiences and oral language facility. Otero Junior College (Colorado) teaches medical terminology in a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program as the students meet the words in other course work. Language Masters help the LPN students master medical terminology through imitation and synthesis. The Informal Vocabulary Inventory used in the Reading Center at Ricks College (Idaho) is a quick and inexpensive diagnostic tool. The student lists the alphabet and then lists, alphabetically, as many words as possible in 10 minutes. Another innovative and inexpensive diagnostic test used at North Idaho College diagnoses knowledge of phonetics, noun and verb usage, and reading comprehension. Multi-track options in a Learning Skills program are offered to any interested student at the University of Utah. The study and reading skills program at the University of Wyoming consists of programed mini-courses for developmental and speed reading, vocabulary building, spelling, listening, and several other topics. (TO)

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IDEALS INTO REALITY: SOME EXAMPLES

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"Sounds like a good idea, but it would take too much time to develop;" "The students would probably like that kind of an approach, but the administration would never support such an expensive reading program;" or, "These follow-up data from students who have been through our reading program suggest a need for change, but other faculty would never go along" are just a few examples of the "Why Don't We . . . Yes, But" thoughts experienced by almost all of us at one time or another. Fortunately, professionals involved in community college and college reading prorams are becoming increasingly responsive to student needs and less easily maneuvered into passive acceptance of the educational status quo. Reading instructors and specialists in varied parts of the country are moving into roles as environmental engineers, consultants to students and instructors

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involved in learning difficulties, communication specialists and program developers. Time, effort and pressure are being expended to make learning relevant to a society which demands higher and higher levels of reading proficiency of its members to equip them to cope with rapidly changing economic, political and social demands. Ideals are being translated into reality! Here are just a few examples of innovations taking place in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming.

Arizona: The Language Experience Approach for Adults

At Maricopa Technical College Adult students have access to a special reading program emphasizing the language experience approach. This program is utilized extensively for adults in need of instruction in beginning reading and capitalized on students' life experiences and oral language facility.

Basic to the program is instructor sensitivity to the student's self-concept. This sensitivity is communicated in several ways; the language experience approach is, in itself, conducive to communicating respect for the resources adult beginning readers already have at their command. Note the following procedure:

1. Instructor and student discuss a subject of interest to the student.
2. A recording is made (either audio-taped or dictated to instructor or aide).
3. The copy is typed <u>verbatim</u>.
4. The student "reads" <u>his</u> material.
5. The instructor observes omissions, substitutions, and errors as well as any corrections in grammar or sentence structure.

6. Copy is retyped if student-made corrections are noted.
7. The instructor follows-up with teaching based on noted problem areas.
8. Material is accumulated as a source book for future reading.
9. The student is praised and encouraged at every step of his development.

As pointed out by Stauffer (1:259), the language experience approach "capitalizes superbly on the fact that these people do not lack the power to absorb ideas and impressions. To the contrary, it builds upon their ideas and impressions and the oral language facility they have acquired."

Colorado: Teaching Medical Terminology in a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Program

From the paramedic to the medical specialist, precise use of medical terms is crucial to success in the medical profession. Yet, learning to understand and use these highly technical terms can be very embarrassing for the novice; like learning to use a second language. Students feel, to say the least, self-conscious and threatened. This is evidenced by the reluctance on their part to use these medical terms when speaking. For instance, a trainee will more than likely refer to a gallbladder operation as "a removal of the gallbladder" before attempting a much easier and more precise term, cholecystectomy.

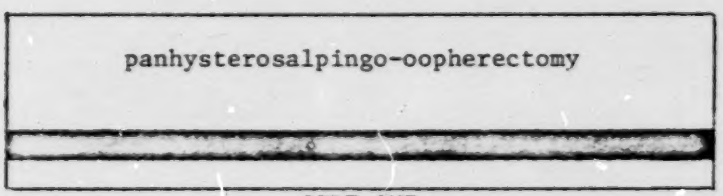
Otero Junior College teaches medical terminology as the student meets it in his other course work. By using a Bell & Howell Language Master (an educational device usually associated with Phonics Development in the elementary grades), the LPN student learns how to master medical terminology in a fashion similar to the way language was first acquired; namely, through imitation and synthesis.

Aside from helping the student master the pronunciation of these words, the program also shows how to use structural analysis to arrive at their word meanings. Although this form of decoding has come into dispute because of the corrupting influence of language change, the stable characteristic of medical terminology (unchanged for centuries) makes structural analysis an effective approach to decoding medical terms.

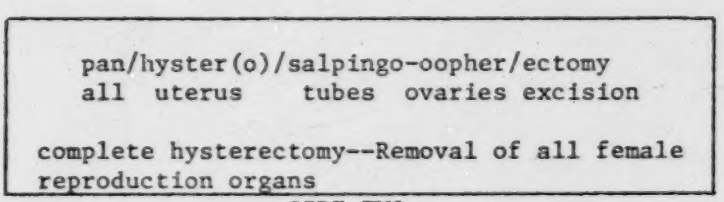
The student listens to the term he doesn't know how to pronounce. After listening to the correct pronunciation, he then attempts (by himself, without witnesses) to imitate the pronunciation pattern of the pre-recorded instructor. He checks his pronunciation by comparing his recording with the pre-recorded pronunciation.

On side two of each card, he learns the meaning of the term as well as its structural parts. Knowing the meaning of each structural component also will aid later in decoding new terms consisting of these roots and affixes. Now, the student can build "word families" of medical terms.

SAMPLE CARD



SIDE ONE


pan/hyster(o)/salpingo-oopher/ectomy
all uterus tubes ovaries excision
complete hysterectomy--Removal of all female reproduction organs

SIDE TWO

Idaho: Diagnosis on a Shoestring

Basic to the success of any instructional program is to know the student; what he is, what he has, and what he needs. To know the student is to know something of his language, his experiential background, his interests and his concept of self. Diagnostic opportunities in a college reading program or center are limited only by the ingenuity and creativity of the instructional personnel of the center; they need not be expensive.

One diagnostic technique which can be very revealing about a student is the Informal Vocabulary Inventory being used in the Reading Center at Ricks College. This inventory is administered to the student by explaining that a survey is going to be taken of his everyday vocabulary; there is no pass or failure involved. After explaining the ten-minute time limit and a few ground rules, the instructor asks the student to list the alphabet down the left hand margin of an 8½" by 11" sheet of paper. The student then lists, alphabetically, as many words as possible during the ten minute time period. Observations such as the following can then be made:

-- Is the student right or left handed?

-- Does the student approach the task with some methodical organization?

-- Does he spend much time searching or do words come to him readily?

-- Is he struggling emotionally or does he seem to be at ease?

-- Are his words monosyllabic or does he have an ample representation of polysyllabic and technical terms, etc.?

Another innovative and inexpensive diagnostic test is being used at North Idaho College in the Learning Skills Center. The English as a Second Language Survey Test was developed to diagnose knowledge of

phonetics, noun and verb usage and reading comprehension. The test has four parts, must be administered on an individual basis, and has proved useful as a general diagnostic tool providing insight into the problem areas to which instruction can be geared.

Utah: Multi-Track Options in a Learning Skills Program

The Learning Skills Services at the University of Utah is a division of the Counseling and Psychological Services. Multi-track options are offered to any student who wishes to take advantage of the services available.

While appointments may be scheduled, most students simply "drop in" for help. This initial contact is used as a brief "intake interview" during which time the student completes an intake form and discusses his concerns with a counselor. The counselor helps to clarify the specific needs of the student, explains the program options that are available and helps to get the student moving towards his goal. Some of the options available are:

1. Independent work in the Learning Skills Lab with an individualized program of skill development.
2. Enrollment in a Learning Skills Seminar.
3. Referral to individual or group counseling program.
4. Referral to specific courses in reading, study skills, math, etc.
5. Referral to specific workshops in skill building.
6. Combinations of the above.

The majority of the students elect to work with an individualized program in the Learning Skills Lab. The Lab is open five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students may come in at any time. All work

is done in the Lab with materials such as the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills System, EDL Programs, or special materials specifically developed to focus upon certain skills. Diagnostic tests are used to determine the student's current level of proficiency for the assignment of materials.

While students are assigned to specific Counselor Aids (paraprofessionals), the relationship is not expected to be tutorial in nature, but rather one in which the counselor aid is viewed as a guide or resource person for the student. The paraprofessionals are trained not only in the use of the Learning Skills materials, but receive on-going training in basic counseling skills such as techniques of referrals, recognition of atypical behaviors, etc. They are also provided opportunities for professional growth through involvement in specific programs such as Test Anxiety Programs, Interpersonal Skills Workshops, and specific task-oriented developmental classes and workshops.

While the program is not offered as a panacea for all students suffering with academic difficulties, students' responses seem to indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the available options and the staff is constantly working on ways to improve services.

Wyoming: Academic Skills Counseling

Although the content material used in the study and reading skills program of the Counseling and Testing Division at the University of Wyoming is similar to that of most other college programs, Wyoming's program has some unique features. Programmed mini-courses, ranging in length from one to twelve hours, and consisting of cassette tapes, study guides and worksheets have been developed locally or purchased commercially. Programs are available for: developmental and speed reading, vocabulary

building, spelling, listening, visual memory, test-taking, time and environment management, note-taking, basic composition, and self-exploration.

Recognizing that some students who request help with study and reading skills can also benefit from individual or group counseling in combination with development of academic skills, a variety of counseling options are available to students. In addition to individual counseling, group programs in self-assertive training, career exploration, encounter and self-awareness are conducted for those who elect participation. These individual and/or group counseling experiences often help a student become more aware of himself, more self-accepting, and better able to examine his own system of motivation. This awareness can have great implications for success in study and reading skills; especially, in view of the types of students who request help in the study and reading skills area.

Most students entering into the program seem to fall into one of four categories. For each category, the "next step" may be quite different. The first category is the student who "can and does." He comes to the program wanting to get better at what he is already good at. He needs little more than an introduction to the materials and he is off and flying, making rapid gains in whatever area he is working. Next is the student who "cannot but does." He is the hard-working, consciencious student for whom learning is somewhat difficult, due to either low specific aptitudes or to inadequate preparation. He needs support and encouragement, but he will usually show gains because he really wants to learn better ways to read and to study. In the third category is the student who "cannot and does not." His system of motivation pushes him in the direction of failure. Often he believes that he cannot learn, a belief that has been reinforced by prior feedback from teachers and peers. He

apathetically fails by not working at all, by not meeting the terms of his contract, and by ultimately dropping out of the program. His motivation seems to be to prove that he is right about himself. Unless intervention can be made quickly, he does not stay long. In the last category is the student who "can but does not." Often he appears to be working hard to fail, even though he has the ability to succeed. He may complain "I'm not interested in my courses," "I cannot keep my mind on what I am doing," or "I'm so tired all of the time." He may be the student who is in college to please his parents or peers, or the student who has declared a major in a field for which he does not have either interest or aptitude. Indeed, his real motivation may be to leave a place where he does not want to be at all. Often he is not aware of his real feelings, but comes into a study and reading skills program looking for easy answers. Students from the first two categories find success in the program because they know where they are going and are determined to get there. Students from the last two categories are less likely to succeed and seem to benefit greatly from the combination of work in the study and reading skills area plus individual or group counseling.

REFERENCES

1. Stauffer, R. C., The Language-Experience Approach to the Teaching of Reading. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960.